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STATE FOR EAP/RSP, G/TIP, EAP/MLS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [SMIG](#) [EAID](#) [KCRM](#) [KFRD](#) [VM](#)

SUBJ: VIETNAM: FY2006 INCLE AND ESF TIP PROPOSALS

REF: A. 05 State 221411

¶1. (SBU) Summary and Comment: We received five proposals for funding aimed at combating trafficking in women and children in and from Vietnam. Our top priority for both the INCLE and ESF funding categories is an ambitious proposal to conduct a nationwide baseline survey to obtain data that can be used to measure the impact of all future trafficking interventions in Vietnam. Vietnam currently lacks any baseline data on trafficking; the entire Vietnamese and international anti-trafficking community operates on the assumption that trafficking in Vietnam is a "big problem." Without decent data on the character and scope of the problem, the main trafficking vectors, the crossing points, the victims, the traffickers and the trends, it remains impossible to gauge the effectiveness of any anti-trafficking programs. Other good project proposals came in from the International Organization and Migration and the Asia Foundation. After a concerted effort to reach out to faith-based organizations, we received proposals from Catholic Relief Services and the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (North) (ECVN) but our review team, which consisted of representatives from the Embassy in Hanoi, the Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City and the USAID office in Hanoi, did not rank these proposals highly.

¶2. (SBU) Summary and Comment, cont'd: The Mission's top recommendation is a local NGO project. If Washington determines that this proposal has merit, Post will have to work closely with the NGO to scrub its budget and develop an effective system of monitoring and evaluation. Encouraging the development of indigenous NGOs is consistent with our MPP, and building capacity in the anti-trafficking NGO sector is essential to fighting the anti-trafficking problem in Vietnam. This will be more work than an off-the-shelf proposal from a large expatriate-run NGO or IO, but it will pay off in results. End Summary and Comment.

¶3. (U) The proposals we receive conformed to the format specified reftel. We have limited this cable to summaries of the proposals and the Mission's observations. We will provide copies of all received proposals to EAP and G/TIP by email. Please note that we have ranked one project at the top of both the INCLE and ESF lists because the baseline data it offers will be applicable to all projects on both the law enforcement and non-law enforcement sides.

BEGIN RANK-ORDERED PROJECT SUMMARIES - INCLE

¶1. Baseline Data Collection and Analyses for Combating Trafficking in Persons in Vietnam under the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking -- USD 450,000 (with the option of reducing the scale of the project, and thus the cost, to between USD 180,000 and USD 280,000).

This is by far the least "sexy" of the projects but, in Post's opinion, the most useful and necessary one. The recipient organization is the small Hanoi-based NGO/think tank Institute for Social Development Studies. It is run by Dr. Le Bach Duong, a U.S.-educated researcher who has worked on trafficking and related issues for years. In particular, Duong was the author of one of the few decent studies done on child prostitution in Vietnam.

Duong's project fills a critical need in the anti-trafficking environment: it aims to provide empirical information that can be used for planning, designing, monitoring and evaluating future intervention programs.

At the moment, no good data exist on trafficking in Vietnam. We have only two kinds of data: anecdotal evidence and a set of statistics supplied by MPS in 2003 and 2004 that is based on police records and thus badly underreports trafficking cases. The international community - and the GVN - spends millions of dollars on anti-trafficking on the basis of assumptions and cannot evaluate the impact of programs due to a lack of baseline data. This project would improve every other future trafficking project in Vietnam.

USAID agrees that this project proposes an intervention which addresses a recognized gap in TIP activities, but notes that the methodology for data collection is weak. In addition, the project is likely to show snapshot data for only a limited number of provinces.

12. IOM -- Combating TIP through Capacity Building and Technical Assistance to the National TIP Steering Committee and Law Enforcement (USD 260,000)

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IOM has taken a pragmatic approach with this proposal, focusing its own strengths on well-established gaps in the existing official approach to TIP in Vietnam. This project has four main activities/focal points. It:

- provides technical assistance to the bureaucrats in Hanoi in order to take the good but general National Plan of Action on trafficking and turn it into a specific, implementable work plan;
- develops a training curriculum for law enforcement officers and border guards on TIP victim protection, and implements it in the six hotspot provinces;
- creates a legal assistance fund to help trafficking survivors deal with legal consequences of trafficking (for example, registering children born in another country while the victim was trafficked) and prosecute traffickers;
- physically upgrades the facilities in key "receiving points" to allow for more humane treatment of trafficking victims and easier reintegration into society.

By focusing on both law enforcement and victim protection, this project creates an important link that has the potential to improve the GVN's capacity to combat trafficking while improving conditions and prospects for survivors of trafficking. This project also builds on successful UNODC and UNICEF efforts, and operates within the agreed National Plan of Action on trafficking.

USAID notes that this proposal has a good policy focus, and IOM has demonstrated past TIP experience. The project also has low overhead (five percent). The implementation plan for the legal aid portion could be clearer, and there may be limited impact from this project due to the small number of personnel trained and victims assisted.

END RANK ORDER SUMMARIES - INCLE

BEGIN RANK ORDER SUMMARIES - ESF

¶1. (repeated from INCLE section above) Baseline Data Collection and Analyses for Combating Trafficking in Persons in Vietnam under the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking -- USD 450,000 (with the option of reducing the scale of the project, and thus the cost, to between USD 180,000 and USD 280,000).

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¶2. The Asia Foundation - Strengthen the Legal Framework to Combat-Trafficking in Persons in Vietnam (USD 193,500)

This project is slightly less coherent than the previous two, and does not target Vietnam's needs as precisely. It is mainly a capacity-building project for two agencies TAF identifies as key to anti-TIP efforts in Vietnam: the Ministry of Justice and the National Assembly. (It also

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works with the National Legal Aid agency and the Women's Union, which are better partners in this effort, but they play a distinctly secondary role.)

This project builds slightly on TAF's excellent work bringing province-level authorities from Vietnam and Cambodia and Vietnam and China together to address trafficking, but this seems as though it is less important to TAF than the Hanoi-based capacity building (including the dreaded study tour) for the National Assembly and some MOJ officials. We are concerned that TAF overestimates the National Assembly's role in the policymaking process. Devoting this many resources to building the NA's capacity to do something they are not ultimately empowered to do in the GVN system may not be the best way to allocate resources.

On the positive side, the funding mechanism is in place, TAF's professionalism and capability are not in doubt, and NA/MOJ capacity building could help with some of the USG's other legal reform goals in Vietnam.

USAID concurs that it is a good idea to expand cross-border information sharing, but also questions whether Vietnam

needs new legislation or increased enforcement of existing legislation. The first two objectives are far reaching, but limited activities (three one-and-a-half day workshops for stakeholders, one two-day Vietnamese-Cambodian workshop plus accompanying reports) seem unlikely to achieve the objectives. We are unimpressed with this project's performance indicators.

13. CRS - Enhancing Local Capacities to Stop Human Trafficking (USD 185,000)

Catholic Relief Services has produced a relatively well-crafted project, with an impressive (and credible) list of outputs, which include:

- research on trafficking;
- meetings and coordination among relevant staff and agencies;
- capacity building for officials;
- training seminars and awareness raising;
- media campaigns;
- economic empowerment through grants; and,
- support for at-risk families.

In addition, CRS is an experienced and capable operator in Vietnam. Unfortunately, this project is very narrowly focused; the entire project takes place in only two districts of Vinh Long province, in the center of the Mekong Delta. It is a worthy project, but we believe our Mission trafficking goals may be better served through one of the other projects.

USAID notes that it is the only project with a grassroots approach, and the only project with cost sharing. Its narrow focus can also be seen as a targeted approach. However, CRS has limited previous TIP experience and this proposal lacks strong links to ongoing projects. It is also unclear whether activities will achieve objectives, and whether CRS will have a person based full time in the province.

14. ECVN - Trafficking Victim Protection and Advocacy (USD 450,000)

The Evangelical Church of Vietnam submitted this proposal after we encouraged our faith-based organization contacts to apply. This is a very ambitious proposal that would essentially create a new anti-TIP NGO in Northern Vietnam under ECVN's umbrella. ECVN does not pretend to have this expertise already; much of the budget for this project is to hire well-paid Vietnamese staff members and train and equip them. ECVN proposes to do community-level awareness raising and (though this is not clear) recruitment of volunteers in 40 separate communities, through a network of paid representatives who will spread the word. This "missionary style" awareness raising will also include a victim referral service, where any TIP victims the ECVN staffers identify will be directed to other NGOs for assistance.

Leaving aside the difficulty of funding ECVN's outreach efforts directly, and the lack of monitoring and evaluation in this project, the project itself is a very expensive awareness-raising campaign that does not offer the benefits of any of the other projects. However, it would (if we could convince the GVN to allow us to fund this organization) allow us to build up Vietnamese civil society

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in general and one of the more dedicated faith-based organizations in particular.

This proposal would require substantial revision if it is considered for funding.

END ESF PROJECT SUMMARIES.

¶4. (SBU) Post would appreciate the Department's initial comments on submitted proposals as soon as possible in order to respond to the hopeful applicants.

BOARDMAN